



Student: **Michael Higley-Vance**

**THIS FORM MUST BE COMPLETELY FILLED IN**

**Follow these procedures:** If requested by your instructor, please include an assignment cover sheet. This will become the first page of your assignment. In addition, your assignment header should include your last name, first initial, course code, dash, and assignment number. This should be left justified, with the page number right justified. For example:

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**Save a copy of your assignments:** You may need to re-submit an assignment at your instructor's request. Make sure you save your files in accessible location.

**Academic integrity:** All work submitted in each course must be your own original work. This includes all assignments, exams, term papers, and other projects required by your instructor. Knowingly submitting another person's work as your own, without properly citing the source of the work, is considered plagiarism. This will result in an unsatisfactory grade for the work submitted or for the entire course. It may also result in academic dismissal from the University.

**EDU7001-8**

**Scott Ebbrecht**

**Advanced Scholarly Writing**

**Prewriting Tips for Choosing a Topic  
EDU7001-2**

**No student comments at this time.**

Michael, as you further hone your topic on blended K-12 learning (which I think is a great, timely topic!) during your academic journey, you will want to be cognizant to form a well-defined problem statement on the topic you propose. At some point, you will find the information below helpful in constructing a problem statement given your proposed topic. Know that it is best to stay more broad at first when determining a topic ... the reason is that it is far easier to narrow your topic as you conduct research, rather than vice-versa.

THE PROBLEM STATEMENT: Begin with a crystal clear statement of the problem. Formulate the problem into a single sentence. Focus on ensuring the problem has been pinpointed and clearly expressed. By stating the problem condition in one sentence, you may be sure a problem has been appropriately targeted. The problem is something that the research will seek to improve as a result of the dissertation activities. It is long-range. The problem statement will also provide

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impetus for several goals and multiple project outcomes or objectives. It should include the following three concepts.

- Who is involved in the problem?
- What is precisely wrong?
- How is the wrongness known?

Here are some examples of problem statements – each contains the three elements.

Employee absenteeism rates have increased to an average of 20% per day and productivity has declined by 50% as measured by a review of company personnel and sales records.

Students in grades three, four and five demonstrated consistent difficulty (on average failed to submit homework 3 out of 5 days per week) in organizing and submitting daily and long-term homework assignments as observed and recorded by their classroom teachers on formal school record keeping instruments.

Newly hired professionals (in their first or second year) lack job-task effectiveness, where they were found to exhibit an average of 5/37 competencies on state standards of professional performance as determined by an Employee Competency Survey.

Fifth grade students are reading on a third grade level, lacking the skills of grade appropriate word recognition, as documented by school-given standardized test scores.

In the last example, the discrepancy between what is and what should be is two grade levels lag in performance and the evidence is in the test scores. That is the problem.

Dr. E.

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**Topic Idea:** I'd like to research more about the benefits of a blended k-12 online learning environment entitled The Effectiveness of K-12 Online Learning for Students of Blended Backgrounds.

Additional Info - More and more students in the public school system are being left behind because they are unable to conform to its behavioral and/or academic expectations. A number of reasons like medical, behavioral, an inability by the school to meet the student's educational needs, or even reasons stemming from bullying could be the cause.

### **Topic Explanation:**

I selected my topic because of my interest in ultimately creating an online learning environment alternative for public school students in grades k-12. I started by utilizing the mind mapping resources provided by the website Study Guides and Practices at <http://www.studygs.net/mapping/index.htm>. This helped me visualize my topic and narrow that topic to a key idea. After I settled on a topic, key idea, and the supporting details I was ready to

HigleMEDU7001-2

visit the NCU library. Here I used the search field to enter the words “online learning,” “effective classroom,” and “virtual classroom”. At this point I read through the articles provided in the search and began to find myself narrowing my focus even more. I was able to test my topic idea by posting it in the Education Discussion Group, on the NCU student portal, asking for input and feedback. I also added the topic idea to my Facebook NCU page where family and friends were asked to do the same. The feedback I received from the discussion group was mixed with opinions in favor and against a k-12 online learning environment. Family and friends provided positive and supportive feedback suggesting that I explore the motivational skills required of a student for such a classroom environment.